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## No leakage at Duane Marine site, DEP says

By JOHN T. WARD  
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PERTH AMBOY — Toxic and carcinogenic chemicals are not leaking into the Arthur Kill from the site of the former Duane Marine Salvage Corp., a spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Protection said yesterday, because most of the estimated 3,500 to 4,000 chemical drums left there are empty.

A fire that destroyed part of the firm more than four years ago incinerated most of the toxic wastes stored at the site, said DEP spokesman, Jim Staples.

"Very many of those barrels are empty," Staples said. "The contents of many drums were burned up com-

pletely in the fire, or they were boiled down to a stable residue."

Staples said if any leakage is occurring at the site, it is "minimal." No "violent threat" has existed since the fire, he said.

"We don't believe that there is any leakage into the kill," he said.

Staples's comments came one day after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced it had ordered 35 firms to pay for the removal of the remaining wastes because they had contributed to a "hazardous situation" at the site.

EPA spokesman, Rich Cahill, said Wednesday that many of the drums at the site were leaking toxic and carcinogenic chemicals into the Arthur Kill. However, he said the

EPA's "primary concern" in ordering the cleanup was the security of the site, which officials feared could again become the scene of a major chemical fire.

Duane Marine, an abandoned chemical waste hauling and storage facility, was partially destroyed in a spectacular fire that consumed Perth Amboy Industrial Center at High and Washington Streets in July 1980. Nearly 2,800 55-gallon drums containing chemical wastes were reported destroyed in the blaze.

The EPA has been paying for security at the site since Nov. 29, Cahill said. The 35 companies named in the order were expected to take over monitoring of the facility today.

The agency said a number of toxic

and cancer-causing substances were present at the site, but in unknown quantities.

City Council President Armand Cannamela last night said city officials were unaware of any toxic chemicals on the site four years after the fire.

"Nobody has told us anything about chemicals still being there," Cannamela said. "It was my understanding that there really wasn't anything remaining, except that the ground may have been contaminated."

Cannamela criticized the two agencies for failing to inform the city about what's been going on at Duane Marine.

"Once we called in those agencies,

it was incumbent upon them to monitor the situation," he said. "The city administration has tried to get that land cleared and freed up so we could use it for ratables, but once you turn these things over to them, it's out of your hands."

The EPA order came under Superfund legislation that allows the agency to seek three times the cost of cleanup from responsible parties in the event they fail to address waste problems themselves. Under customary Superfund financing arrangements, the federal agency pays 90 percent of the cleanup costs and the state pays 10 percent, Staples said. Cahill has estimated the cost of the cleanup to be at least \$1 million.

Asked what activity had taken

place at Duane Marine since the fire, Staples said the DEP "was going to have it cleaned up, but then we succeeded in getting EPA to do it."

He said the four-year period was one of relative inaction because the "stabilizing" effects of the fire made the site less hazardous than it had been. "It was just a case where you give priorities to everything that has to be taken care of immediately," he said. "If it hadn't had the fire, it would have been cleaned up that much sooner."

Middlesex County Health officials said yesterday they were unaware of the situation at Duane Marine because the state never asked for county participation in monitoring the site.



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